



PUBLIC HOSPITAL FUNDING PLEDGE WELCOME, BUT REAL REFORM IS NEEDED

The President of The Australian Medical Association in South Australia (AMA SA) Dr John Williams has welcomed the Prime Minister's commitment to boost funding in South Australia's public hospitals, but says a long-term fix is needed.

Labor has promised to deliver an additional \$1.7 billion to Australia's public hospitals next year, if successful at the upcoming federal election.

South Australia stands to gain an additional \$169 million, an increase of 15%.

'This one-off funding commitment from the Prime Minister offers a shot in the arm for South Australia, but it falls short of what's really needed.' Dr Williams says

'Last year we witnessed record ambulance ramping and a code yellow which shut down essential planned surgery for weeks on end.

'There's no doubt that an extra \$169 million of Commonwealth funding will help, but we need a lasting solution if we're going to tackle the big problems in our health system.'

AMA has been calling for a long-term agreement between the Commonwealth and the states to set up a sustainable funding arrangement for public hospitals.

Today's announcement reflects an extension of an existing agreement.

'We're still digesting the details, but on the surface, this appears to be a missed opportunity for genuine reform,' Dr Williams says.

'We need state and federal governments to commit to a long-term agreement, not just band-aid solutions.'

AMA's [2024 Public Hospital Report Card](#) suggests that South Australia's emergency departments consistently perform well below the national average.

Dr Williams says finding a long-term fix also requires greater investment in general practice.

'General practice is the first line of defence. It's the most effective and crucially the most cost-efficient way to keep our population well and out of hospitals,' he says.

'But decades of Medicare rebate freezes have stripped billions of dollars from the system.

'Medicare is no longer fit for purpose and GPs are not being supported to deliver the level of care the community needs.'

This week AMA launched its [Modernise Medicare](#) campaign – a fully costed and tested plan that will increase GP appointment durations and boost the GP workforce.

Dr Williams says the plan will help combat problems like ambulance ramping and bed block in South Australia and across the country.

'If GPs are given the support to treat their patients' complex needs, we can reduce avoidable hospital admissions,' he says

'This will help alleviate ramping, ease the pressure on EDs and lead to much better health outcomes for patients.

'Health is clearly shaping up as a major battleground in the upcoming federal election.

'We're calling on all sides of government to support our Modernise Medicare campaign and help us build a system that can meet the complex needs of the community in 2025.'

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